



University of Zurich, Fall Term 2012

“Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) in Management and Organization Studies”

Instructor: Prof. Peer C. Fiss,
University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business

Course Dates: October 1 to October 05, 2012
(the course starts on Monday early afternoon and ends on Friday around noon)

Location: tba

Course overview

Much of current management and organizational research—from contingency theory and configurational approaches to the HRM literature and the resource-based view—conceives of organizations as complex systems of interdependent factors. Yet, conventional statistical methods are frequently less adept at unpacking these complex interdependencies. The current course provides an introduction to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a set-theoretic method developed by Charles Ragin that is better suited to the examination of situations where causality is conjunctural, and equifinal, i.e. where there is more than one path to an outcome. The course consists of a combination of lectures and hands-on sessions that offer an introduction to working with the fs/QCA software package.

Course objectives

After successful completion of the course students should be able to:

1. understand the goals of and assumptions underlying QCA
2. know essential concepts such as consistency, coverage, and coincidence
3. conduct data analysis using the fsQCA software package
4. design and execute research projects using set-theoretic approach

Course prerequisites

None

Credit Requirements

1. Full course attendance. Students are expected to come prepared to class.
2. At the end of the course students will be asked to complete an exam.



Course content

1. *Background*: The case-oriented/variable oriented distinction; the distinctiveness of configurational comparative research; what is QCA?
2. *Basics*: Introduction to set theoretic methods, necessity and sufficiency, consistency, coverage, coincidence
3. *Crisp Set Analysis*: Overview of crisp-set QCA (csQCA), examples of crisp set analyses, the three solutions—complex, parsimonious, and intermediate, easy versus difficult counterfactuals
4. *Fuzzy Set Analysis*: suzzy sets and fuzzy set relations, calibrating fuzzy sets, fuzzy set consistency, coverage, and coincidence
5. *Application*: Working with the fsQCA software package to conduct calibration and analysis, reading output, conducting robustness checks

Course material

The main book for this course is:

Ragin, Charles C. 2008. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy-Sets and Beyond*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Helpful background readings are:

Ragin, Charles C. 1987. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Ragin, Charles C. 2000. *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Rihoux, Benoit and Charles C. Ragin (eds.) 2008. *Configurational Comparative Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

In addition, I will assign several specific research papers that show applications of QCA to the management and organizational topics.

Application

The number of participants is limited. Please send your application including a short CV to Yvonne Oswald (yvonne.oswald@business.uzh.ch) latest by Friday, August 10th, 2012. For further details and questions please contact Yvonne Oswald; 0041 44 634 42 76.